

Free Care

Answering your questions about the
Massachusetts Uncompensated Care Pool

Notes

This newsletter is intended to answer questions about Free Care eligibility, and to help hospitals and community health centers understand the free care eligibility regulation, 114.6 CMR 10.00.

If you have questions about free care eligibility, please contact the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy at 617-988-3222.

Please share this newsletter with everyone at your facility who assists patients with free care applications.

Family Definition

The Division's regulations define the family as "the patient, spouse and any minor dependents living in the household, and unborn children." An individual is a minor dependent until his or her 18th birthday. Once an individual turns 18, he or she is considered an adult and must apply separately for free care. Minors who can document that they do not live in their parents' household and are managing their own financial affairs may apply for free care on their own as emancipated minors.

Residency

The Division's regulations define a resident as "a person living in Massachusetts with the intention of remaining in the state indefinitely. A resident is not required to maintain a fixed address. The following conditions do not meet the requirements for residency: (1) confinement in a nursing home, hospital or other medical institution, and (2) relocation to Massachusetts for the sole purpose of receiving health care benefits." Non-residents are eligible for free care for urgent and emergency care only.

Individuals who are living in Massachusetts temporarily, such as people who come here to live and work in the summer and live elsewhere for the rest of the year, are not considered residents. Therefore, these individuals are eligible for free care for urgent and emergency care only. The Division would consider individuals who live in Massachusetts for part of the year and in another state for another part of the year to be residents of Massachusetts if they file their income taxes here.

Self-Employed Individuals

When processing free care applications from self-employed individuals who have provided a federal tax return as documentation of income, use the information on Line 12 as the individual's self-employment income (this is the amount transferred from Schedule C or C-EZ). Add this amount to any other earned or unearned income that the individual reports on his or her application form when calculating family income.

CenterCare

Patients who are enrolled in CenterCare can apply for free care by showing a copy of the CenterCare card that indicates that the person has signed the Division's Assignment of Rights on the CenterCare application (this is indicated by a checked and initialed box on the back of the card). These patient are not required to complete a condensed free care application (DHCFCP-FC2). However, the provider must keep a copy of the card (both sides) as documentation and complete a facility use only form for the patient, and must enter the patient into the electronic free care application as a condensed application. Patients who are on a CenterCare waiting list are not considered enrolled in CenterCare and must complete a free care application (DHCFCP-FC1) with documentation.

Data Collection

All hospitals and community health centers should now be using the free care application software to process free care applications and submit data to the Division. Questions about using the software should be directed to the toll free help desk at 800-542-7648. The Division will soon be soliciting feedback on the software application from providers regarding modifications that might be considered when the software is updated sometime next year.

Specifications for submitting UB92 claims to the Pool were recently mailed to all hospitals. Claims for all services paid for by the Pool must be submitted to the Division. Hospitals and billing system vendors that have questions about the specifications or requirements are encouraged to contact the claims helpdesk at claims.help@state.ma.us. The Division will begin to collect claims test data from hospitals in September.

Community health centers will receive the claims specifications in the near future.

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Free Care Application Forms

Translations of the free care application are available on the Division's web site at www.state.ma.us/dhcfp. Providers without Internet access can also request copies from the Division by calling Cloria Bethea at 617-988-3177. Translations are available in Chinese, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

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 **Are you the correct contact person at your site for this information? Are your name and address correct?**
Please note any changes directly on this label and send to the address above or fax to Dorothy Barron at (617) 727-7662.

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Access to Health Care in Massachusetts

The Division recently published *Access to Health Care in Massachusetts: A Catalog of Health Care Programs for Uninsured and Underinsured Individuals*. The information in this catalog is also included in the electronic free care application under the "other programs" menu. Designed as a comprehensive resource for providers, this catalog contains detailed information on over 75 federal, state, and local programs that are available to pay for all or part of an uninsured or underinsured patient's care. It includes programs ranging from MassHealth and Medicare to free dental clinics and discount prescription drug plans.

We hope that this catalog, which provides information on eligibility guidelines, the range of services covered, and how to apply, will facilitate access to health care by helping to refer individuals to the most comprehensive health care programs for which they qualify. One free copy was recently sent to each hospital and community health center. Additional copies are available for purchase for only \$10.00 each (this price includes shipping and handling). To order, please contact Terry Crane at 617-988-3105 or email terry.crane@state.ma.us.